

# Indian Education Newsletter

Billings Public Schools

Vol. 2 Issue 5

February, 2008



## From the Indian Ed Office...

One of the most asked questions of Indian people is, "what do we call you?" Do you prefer "American Indian" or "Native American?" It can become quite a conundrum as many names have been used in legal and academic settings alike. These names include, but are not limited to, *American Indian*, *Native American*, *First Nations*, *Indigenous*, *Aboriginal*, *Amerinds* and more. "First Nations" and "Aboriginal Peoples" are used by the Canadian government. "American Indian" and "Alaska Native" are the terms used by the US government. The term, "Native American" gained popularity in the '60's and '70's. However, the term "Native American" was originally used in mid-1800's and into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as a reference to the "nativists"; the native-born Americans who were opposed to immigration. These "Native Ameri-

cans" opposed the influx of Irish immigrants, Roman Catholics and immigrants from Eastern Europe. Since many of the new immigrants belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, it created even more hatred towards these groups. The term became less associated with the nativist movement and more identified with American Indian people by the '60's. In the '90's, the wave of political correctness added to the confusion of many people.

So what is the answer? Well, it's up to the individual; however "American Indians" would be a safe bet as it is used in legal definitions by state and federal governments. Most would refer to themselves as "Indian", however, some may prefer "Native American". If you know the persons tribal affiliation, that is even better. Taking it a step further,

knowing the name they call themselves, (Apsáalooke, A'aninin and Nakoda for example) demonstrates a deeper understanding and respect in the greater context of individual identity.



Eagle Child - White Clay

## Dee Neiter, 2008 Montana Education Support Professional of the Year

Surviving middle school can be a struggle for just about anyone. For Montana's American Indian children who often face poverty and racism, it's especially difficult. Fortunately for the Indian students at Riverside Middle School on the south side of Billings, they have Dee Neiter to help them navigate the stormy waters of middle school. Neiter is the school's Indian Education Tutor. For two decades, Neiter

has helped Indian children – and all children – survive and thrive in school. "Her commitment to her students starts every day before the first bell rings and usually continues long after the school day is over," said Janet Baum, Neiter's colleague and president of her local union in Billings. In honor of her boundless dedication to students, Neiter recently was named as Montana's

Education Support Professional (ESP) of the Year for 2008. "I was shocked. I'm still shocked," Neiter said of the award. "I'm very touched." Neiter understands the pressures minority children face. She herself is Navajo and Spanish. She grew up speaking Spanish in a low-income family.

*continued on p. 3*



### Special points of interest:

- Dee Neiter, 2008 Montana ESP of the Year
- Western Heritage Center
- Book Review: *Native American History for Dummies*
- Lessons Learned: *Indian Ed for All*
- 506 Forms

### Inside this issue:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Western Heritage Center—<br>IEFA Materials              | 2 |
| Lewis & Clark Elementary—<br>Missoula                   | 2 |
| Book Review: <i>Native American History for Dummies</i> | 2 |
| Yakama Tribal Member 2007<br>Miss Washington            | 3 |
| What is a 506 Form?                                     | 4 |



*Happy Valentine's Day*

## Engaging Our Youth in American Indian History and Culture

The American Indian Tribal Histories Project (AITHP) is one of the programs of the Western Heritage Center. The AITHP is focused on preserving and maintaining American Indian tribal histories and cultures from an American Indian perspective.

Two sets of **educational DVDs** featuring tribal members discussing their tribe's history and culture have been produced and are currently being used in schools across Montana: one set is on the Crow Nation; the other is on the Northern Cheyenne tribe. The AITHP staff is currently working on a DVD set on the Chippewa Cree tribe, which will be available in early 2009.

Two **traveling exhibits**, one on the Crow Nation and one on the Northern Cheyenne tribe, are available to travel to any school or organization at no charge (except shipping charges for out-of-town schools). These tabletop exhibits feature contemporary tribal members and excerpts from their essays about what it means to be a tribal member, the challenges they've faced and what they see for their tribe's future. An on-line component of this exhibit provides each of the tribal member's full-length essays.

Teachers, students and the general public are invited to use the AITHP **Oral History Archive Collection** at the Western Heritage Cen-

ter. Dozens of interviews of Crow and Northern Cheyenne tribal members were recorded on a wide array of topics. Visitors to the archive may watch the video recorded interviews on DVD, listen to the audio portion on CD, or read the typed transcription where the original interview was conducted in a native language other than English. Chippewa Cree interviews are being added this year and will be available for public access in early 2009.

Two **teaching trunks**, one on the Crow and one on the Northern Cheyenne tribe, have been in use for several years.

*continued on p. 3*

## Lessons Learned from Lewis & Clark Elementary

Lewis & Clark Elementary School in Missoula, MT has put together a document that details their experience and outcomes from an Indian Education for All project developed with the assistance of a Ready to Go Grant from the OPI. The Process Guide, authored by Phyllis Ngai and Karen Allen, details how the project was put into place. Towards the end of the document are some "Lessons Learned" that provide good tips for teachers as they begin implementing IEFA into their classrooms. L&C Elementary is an urban school located on the traditional homeland of the Salish and Pend d'Oreille Tribes, near the

current Flathead Indian Reservation in Western Montana. This guide presents insights gained from a two-year process of implementing school-wide Indian Education for All. During academic years 2005-2007, Lewis & Clark (L&C) School received three grants, including an American Association of University Women (AAUW) Community Action Grant, a Montana Committee for the Humanities Grant, and the Ready-to-Go Grant from OPI, to develop, pilot, and evaluate innovative strategies for implementing Indian Education for All (IEFA) as a form of place-based multicultural education in a K-5 urban public

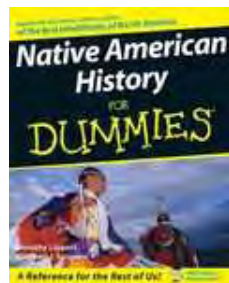
*"This guide presents insights gained from a two-year process of implementing school-wide Indian Education for All. ."*

school setting. You can find information on the L&C grant and download the complete report on the OPI website at:

[www.opi.mt.gov/IndianEd/topics.html](http://www.opi.mt.gov/IndianEd/topics.html)

## Book Review: Native American History for Dummies

Native American History For Dummies introduces readers to the thousand-year-plus history of the first inhabitants of North America and explains their influence on the European settlement of the continent. Covering the history and customs of the scores of tribes that once populated the land, this friendly guide features vivid studies of the lives of such icons as



*Native American History for Dummies*  
© For Dummies

Pocahontas, Sitting Bull, and Sacagawea; discusses warfare and famous battles, offering new perspectives from both battle lines; and includes new archaeological and forensic evidence, as well as oral histories that show events from the perspective of these indigenous peoples. The author worked in concert with Native American authorities, institutions, and his-

insight and information.

Discover:

- \*How tribes formed and where they migrated
- \*The impact of Spain and France on the New World
- \*The lives of influential Indian men and women
- \*How Native peoples maximized their environment

## Engaging Our Youth in American Indian History and Culture...continued

*continued from p. 2*

Teachers may reserve these trunks for use in their classrooms. Now, a new teaching trunk has been created: the Montana's American Indian Tribal Flags trunk. This trunk contains the full-size and tabletop flags of each of Montana's tribes, the Montana state flag and the U.S. flag; a book describing the symbols used in all of the tribal flags across the U.S.; tabletop signage; posters with each of the nation's tribal flags; a coloring activity to create your own flag; and a suggested lesson plan for classroom use.



The American Indian Tribal History Project's traveling exhibits feature contemporary Crow and Northern Cheyenne tribal members, who share their thoughts about being Indian, their challenges and successes and their thoughts about the futures of their tribes. Teachers and students can read their full-length essays on our website: [www.ywhc.org](http://www.ywhc.org).

## Yakama Tribal Member is Miss Washington 2007

© Yakima Herald-Tribune January 2008

Elyse Umemoto sparkles. Up there, under the lights, in a beaded, coffee-colored gown, she flashes a megawatt smile. She looks radiant on the runway. Confidant. Poised. Prepared. If she wins, she could make pageant history. Umemoto could be the first Miss Washington to become Miss America. She also could be the first American Indian to wear the crown. And the first Hispanic. As well as the second Asian. Her ethnicity is exactly one-quarter American Indian -- she's an enrolled Yakama. "One of the messages I want to share as Miss Washington and potentially as Miss America

is it doesn't matter the color of your skin," says Umemoto. "If it did, I'd be four different colors. I come from four very different backgrounds. It doesn't matter if you have a lot of money, or if you have none at all," she says, using herself as an example. "I come from humble beginnings. And it certainly doesn't matter where you grew up. It could be on an Indian reservation, like I did. With the right mindset and positive role models, you can accomplish anything -- even Miss America. And I think I'm living proof of that."



2007 Miss Washington Elyse Umemoto

## Dee Neiter continued...

*continued from p. 1*

"She knows where her students are coming from," said Baum. Along with tutoring students in math, reading, and writing, Neiter finds ways to help low-income students get eyeglasses and dental appointments. She oversees the school's Upward Bound Program and teaches knitting at the "Friday Late Night," a program to keep students off the streets from 5:30 to 9:00 p.m. Former students and their families "remember her as the saint that helped them through those rough middle

years," said Marcia Beaumont, Neiter's colleague at Riverside. Montana's Indian children tend to have a much higher dropout rate and lower achievement than their non-Indian peers. "A lot of our Indian kids drop out after the 8<sup>th</sup> grade," Neiter said. Her goal to help as many students as possible, one student at a time, stay in school and succeed. The Diversity Club Neiter sponsors at Riverside has helped keep many children in school by giving them a sense of belonging and dignity. Through the club, Neiter finds opportunities

for students to volunteer in the community and celebrate Indian culture. "She leads by example, and the club's emphasis, like hers, is in service," said Beaumont. The ESP of the Year program is administered by MEA-MFT, the statewide union that represents Education Support Professionals as well as teachers, higher education faculty, and other public employees across Montana. Neiter will now go on to represent Montana in the National Education Association's national Education Support Professional of the Year program.

Room 216A  
Lincoln Center  
415 North 30th  
Billings, MT. 59101

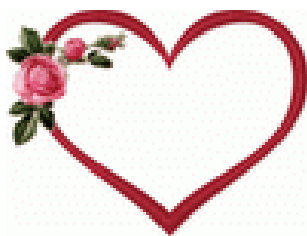
Phone: 406-247-3765  
Fax: 406-247-3713  
E-mail: foxe@billings.k12.mt.us



*Indian Education for All — Closing the Achievement Gap for American Indian Students in Billings Public Schools.*

**We're on the Web!**

**<http://www.billingssschools.org/indian-education.htm>**



## Title VII: What is a 506 Form?

What is a 506 Form? It is a form required by the Title VII Program in the Billings Public Schools to determine the number of eligible American Indian students in SD2. Title VII is a federally funded program through the Department of Education operating within the Office of Indian Education in Washington, D.C. Funds go directly to local programs to meet academic, social, and cultural needs, as well as college and career planning. All students of Native American descent are eligible to participate. Eligibility does not consider income level. In order to apply for a formula grant under the Indian Education Program, your child's school must determine the number of Indian children enrolled. Any child who meets the following definition may be counted for this purpose.

An Indian parent or guardian of an Indian child is not required to complete or submit this form to the school. However, if a form is not

submitted, the school cannot count the student for funding under the program. This form will become part of the student's school record and **will not need to be completed every year**. This form will be maintained at the school and information on the form will not be released without written approval of the parent.

Definition: Indian means any individual who is (1) a member (as defined by the Indian tribe or band) of an Indian tribe or band, including those Indian tribe or bands terminated since 1940, and those recognized by the State in which the tribe or band reside; or (2) a descendant in the first or second degree (parent or grandparent) as described in (1); or (3) considered by the Secretary of the Interior to be an Indian for any purpose; or (4) an Eskimo or Aleut or other Alaska Native; or (5) a member of an organized Indian group that received a grant under the Indian Education Act of 1988 as it was in effect October 19, 1994

*Billings Public Schools Indian Education Office works to promote Indian Education throughout the District. The programs we oversee include:*

- *Indian Education for All*
- *Title VII Indian Education*
- *American Indian Achievement*

*Working in partnership with Billings teachers, administrators, parents and community, we can make a difference for American Indian students in Billings Public Schools.*

As with any formula grant, the amount of funding is based on a certain criteria, in this case, the number of students with a 506 form on file with the district. The funding from Title VII helps to provide tutors and a counselor at Senior High, Riverside and Lewis & Clark. With a district the size of Billings, it is difficult to provide staff and services to reach every Indian student across the district. Ideally, a Title VII staff member in each building would be beneficial. However, the Title VII staff do their best to provide outreach to all Indian students and parents of Indian students in the district. As part of the grant, an Indian Parent Advisory Committee meets monthly in the Lincoln Center. For more information, contact the Indian Education Office.

